

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 053172
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BELGRADE FOR USDEL CSCE

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TAGS: CSCE, OCON

SUBJECT: RESTON COLUMN ON BELGRADE MEETING.

FOLLOWING, FYI, IS COLUMN ENTITLED "LETTER FROM
BELGRADE" BY JAMES RESTON WHICH APPEARED ON THE
OP-ED PAGE OF THE MARCH 1 EDITION OF THE NY TIMES.

BEGIN TEXT.

THE FIRST SERIOUS EFFORT TO GET THE UNITED STATES AND
THE SOVIET UNION TO COMPROMISE THEIR DIFFERENCES OVER
HUMAN RIGHTS IS ENDING HERE AT THE BELGRADE-HELSINKI
CONFERENCE IN DISAGREEMENT.

PRESIDENT TITO HAS INTERVENED AT THE LAST MINUTE WITH
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PAGE 02 STATE 053172

A PERSONAL MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT BREZHNEV IN MOSCOW TO
TRY TO GET BOTH SIDES TOGETHER ON SOME KIND OF VAGUE
COMMUNIQUE, BUT EVEN THAT HAS NOT WORKED. WASHINGTON
AND MOSCOW THEREFORE HAVE AGREED TO DISAGREE, BUT AT
LEAST THEY HAVE DECIDED TO MEET AGAIN AT MADRID IN 1980
TO CONTINUE THE DEBATE, AND THAT IS PROBABLY ABOUT AS
MUCH AS COULD BE EXPECTED.

TRYING TO SUM IT UP HERE THE OTHER NIGHT, AMBASSADOR ARTHUR GOLDBERG FOR THE UNITED STATES REMINDED HIS COLLEAGUES AT THE CONFERENCE OF EDMUND BURKE'S CONCLUSION THAT MOST POLITICAL DECISIONS WERE A CHOICE "BETWEEN THE DISAGREEABLE AND THE INTOLERABLE."

THAT, HE SAID, WAS ABOUT WHERE THIS CONFERENCE WAS ENDING. IT WAS A "DISAGREEABLE" CONCLUSION BUT NOT "INTOLERABLE" BECAUSE IT HAD CLARIFIED THE DISPUTE BETWEEN MOSCOW AND THE WESTERN DEMOCRACIES ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND THEY HAD DECIDED TO TALK ABOUT IT LATER.

THE UNITED STATES DELEGATION AND THE OTHER WESTERN DELEGATIONS HERE ARE NOT HAPPY ABOUT THE RESULT. IT IS TWO YEARS AND FOUR MONTHS SINCE THE SOVIETS AGREED AT HELSINKI THAT IF THE WESTERN NATIONS WOULD ACCEPT THEIR WARTIME CONQUESTS AND BOUNDARIES IN EASTERN EUROPE, THE SOVIET UNION WOULD AGREE TO AN INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF INTERNAL POLICIES ON HUMAN RIGHTS.

AMBASSADOR VORONTSOV OF THE SOVIET UNION, WHO CAME HERE AS HIS COUNTRY'S NO. 2 MAN IN WASHINGTON AND IS NOW GOING ON TO BE MOSCOW'S AMBASSADOR IN NEW DELHI, WAS ALMOST AMIABLE WHEN HE ARRIVED IN BELGRADE LAST SEPTEMBER. HE THEN TURNED DEFENSIVE UNDER ATTACK ON UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 STATE 053172

THE HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTION, AND HAS LATELY BEEN VERY TOUGH AND EVEN HOSTILE TO AMBASSADOR GOLDBERG'S ARGUMENT THAT MOSCOW AGREED TO THE HELSINKI HUMAN RIGHTS AGREEMENT AND HAD TO ABIDE BY IT.

WHAT IS INTERESTING ABOUT THIS IS THAT THE MORE MR. VORONTSOV AND THE COMMUNIST EAST EUROPEAN DELEGATIONS HAVE ARGUED AGAINST THE HUMAN RIGHTS PRINCIPLES OF THE HELSINKI AGREEMENT, THE MORE THE WESTERN NATIONS HAVE AGREED TO STAND TOGETHER. THE FRENCH HAVE DISSENTED OCCASIONALLY, BUT IN THE END THE WESTERN DELEGATIONS WERE AS UNIFIED AS MR. VORONTSOV AND HIS EASTERN COMMUNIST ALLIES.

IN SHORT, THE UNITED STATES DELEGATION HAS GOT THE TWO THINGS IT WANTED IN THIS BELGRADE CONFERENCE: FIRST, A REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROMISES IN THE HELSINKI AGREEMENT, SIGNED BY THE SOVIET UNION; AND SECOND, AN AGREEMENT TO REVIEW THE RECORD OF HUMAN RIGHTS AGAIN IN 1980.

IT IS INTERESTING THAT MARSHAL TITO OF YUGOSLAVIA

DOES NOT AGREE WITH THE UNITED STATES THEORY OF AMERICA'S SUCCESS HERE AT THE SAVA CONFERENCE. I HAVE JUST SPENT TWO HOURS WITH HIM AT HIS WINTER HOUSE ON THE ADRIATIC COAST, AND HE REGARDS THE INCREASING TENSIONS BETWEEN WASHINGTON AND MOSCOW AS A POTENTIAL DISASTER FOR THE POLICY OF DETENTE.

MARSHAL TITO AGREES THAT PRESIDENT CARTER'S EMPHASIS ON HUMAN RIGHTS WAS USEFUL BUT HE INSISTS THAT IT IS DANGEROUS IF MADE THE MAJOR TEST OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE NUCLEAR NATIONS. HE WILL HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY TO PRESIDENT CARTER ABOUT THIS WHEN HE GETS TO WASHINGTON IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS. HE ALSO HAS STRONG VIEWS ABOUT WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND IN THE HORN UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 04 STATE 053172

OF AFRICA, AND BELIEVES THE RELATIONS BETWEEN MR. CARTER AND MR. BREZHNEV ON THESE QUESTIONS ARE BEING CONFUSED BY THEIR DIFFERENCES OVER HUMAN RIGHTS HERE IN BELGRADE.

FOR TITO, HIS TRIP TO WASHINGTON IS GOING TO BE SORT OF A SUMMING UP OF HIS LONG EXPERIENCE AS A MIDDLE MAN BETWEEN EAST AND WEST, AND BETWEEN THE NONALIGNED NATIONS AND THE MAJOR POWERS.

HE CLEARLY DOESN'T LIKE THE BREAKDOWN IN THE BELGRADE CONFERENCE, OR WHAT HE CALLS THE "BRAVE" BLUNDERS OF PRESIDENT ANWAR EL-SADAT IN THE MIDDLE EAST, OR THE GROWING TENSIONS IN THE HORN OF AFRICA, AND HE IS CLEARLY DETERMINED TO CONFRONT ALL THESE PROBLEMS WITH PRESIDENT CARTER WHEN HE GETS TO WASHINGTON NEXT WEEK.

END TEXT.

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